

MINDFULNESS



Mindfulness & Self-Care – Being Present is Even More Important Now!

You may have heard your providers or fellow Veterans use the terms “**mindfulness**” and “**self-care.**” What do they mean?

“**Mindfulness**” is purposely paying attention to the present moment, without judgment. We can do this by simply bringing all our attention fully to a few breaths or a particular activity we’re doing, like washing dishes or brushing teeth.

“**Self-care**” refers to the many ways we can pay attention to ourselves with our own health in mind. It can be anything from a few moments of deep, relaxed breathing when we wake up, to going for a walk when we start to feel tired or stressed, to taking the time to prepare a simple, nourishing snack for ourselves in the middle of the day.

Now, more than ever, it’s important for all of us to take simple steps toward self-care. Maybe you already have a morning routine, a walking path, or a great healthy go-to snack. Whatever it is, even a few minutes of dedicated time to pause, breathe, and be grateful for the moment can make all the difference.

Looking for a way to get started? Try this:

1-minute Mindfulness

- Sit up in a tall but easy posture (or stand with your feet slightly apart, arms resting by your sides)
- Soften or close your eyes
- Feel your feet on the floor and sense your body, from your feet to your head
- Become aware of your breath
- Take a deep breath into your belly and exhale fully
- Focus your attention entirely on this simple act of inhaling and exhaling
- Take another deep breath, this time allowing the breath to move into the abdomen and up to the solar plexus. Exhale fully.
- Bring your attention back to your breath.
- Now draw the breath from your belly, up through the abdomen, and into your chest. Fill the body with breath. Exhale fully.
- Open your eyes and gently bring yourself back to the present

Repeat as many times as you like!



VAMC Manchester

Healthy Living Newsletter

Helping New Hampshire Veterans Live Their Best Life

April is Infertility Awareness Month:

Understand your benefits

Infertility is when a couple does not become pregnant after 12 months of trying. Some couples should seek infertility evaluation earlier than 12 months. For example, women over 35 years old or people with a known cause of infertility, such as having blocked fallopian tubes or being unable to produce sperm.

Who is eligible for infertility services?

VA provides infertility evaluation, management, and treatment services to Veterans who are enrolled and are eligible for VA health care. All enrolled and eligible Veterans may be provided with infertility services regardless of service connection, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, relationship, or marital status.



What infertility services are available at VA?

Infertility care is available either at your local VA medical facility or through referral to health care providers in your community. Below are examples of infertility services covered by VA.

What is in vitro fertilization (IVF)?

IVF is the process of fertilization that involves manually fertilizing an egg with a sperm outside of the body and then transferring the fertilized egg, or embryo, to the uterus.

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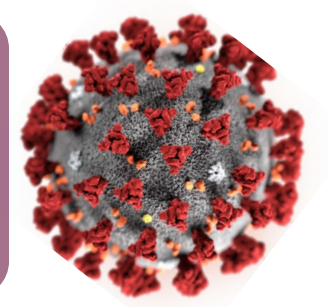
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COVID UPDATE:

CALL BEFORE YOU ARRIVE



WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS:



FEVER



COUGH



SHORTNESS OF BREATH

If you develop any of the above symptoms, please call the nurse triage line and speak with a nurse.

If you have had exposure to someone with a confirmed case of COVID, stay home and call the triage line.

(603) 624-4366 x 3199

If you develop **emergency warning signs** for COVID-19 get **medical attention immediately**. Emergency warning signs include*:

- Trouble breathing
- Persistent pain or pressure in the chest
- New confusion or inability to arouse
- Bluish lips or face

*This list is not all inclusive. Please consult your medical provider for any other symptoms that are severe or concerning

Source: CDC

Stay Home and Stay Healthy!

No one is thrilled about the idea of being confined to their home while this virus spreads, but it is imperative to stop the spread of this virus and protect our most vulnerable.

Here are some activities that might make staying at home more enjoyable!



Get out and walk! This is a great way to stay health without the need of a gym,



Try a new recipe. See the recipe on page 5.



Give your family a call or check on a elderly neighbor.



Start some seeds for your spring garden.



Read a new book or a classic.



Learn a new hobby. Check out sites like youtube.com for tutorials.



HEALTHY RECIPE

A Message from Whole Health:

As they say, “When one door closes, another door opens.” This relates to you too! Just because you have activities canceled or need to stay home doesn’t mean you can’t work on ways to better your health and well-being.

Work with your VA Whole Health Coach on setting health goals and exploring areas of self-care such as: working the body, food and drink, sleep and relaxation, surroundings, relationships, spirit and soul, and power of the mind. These sessions are available NOW via VA Video Connect (VVC) or telephone.

What better time than now?

To sign up for individual health coaching please call 603-540-9629

Mindfulness Coach



Mindfulness means noticing and paying attention to what is going on in the present moment, without passing judgment on it. Mindfulness has been shown to be effective for reducing stress, improving emotional balance, increasing self-awareness, helping with anxiety and depression, and coping more effectively with chronic pain.

Mindfulness Coach also offers a library of information about mindfulness, 12 audio-guided mindfulness exercises, a growing catalog of additional exercises available for free download, goal-setting and tracking, a mindfulness mastery assessment to help you track your progress over time, customizable reminders, and access to other support and crisis resources.

For more info:

<https://mobile.va.gov/app/mindfulness-coach>

Blackened Salmon Tacos with Shaved Red Cabbage, Onion & Avocado Crema

Ingredients

- 6-8 oz. salmon or fish of your choice
- 1 Tbsp blackened seasoning*
- 1/2 Tbsp olive oil
- 1 cup red cabbage
- 1/2 yellow onion
- 2 stalks scallion
- 3/4 cup plain Greek yogurt
- 1 avocado
- 1 lime
- 1-2 cups arugula
- Corn tortillas
- Salt & pepper
- Cilantro

Instructions

1. Sprinkle spices on top of fish so that the flesh is mostly covered with spices. Heat 1/2 Tbsp olive oil in sauce pan and add fish spice-side down. Cook on each side for 3-4 minutes or until done.
2. While fish cooks, thinly slice cabbage and onion and chop scallions.
3. To a blender add yogurt, avocado, lime juice and salt. Blend until smooth and season if needed.
4. When fish is done, break it up into pieces. It’s time to build those tacos! Start with a base of arugula and add cabbage, onion, fish, avocado cream and cilantro.



* If you can’t find blackened seasoning, Cajun seasoning also works. Or make your own spice blend using paprika, cayenne, pepper and garlic powder.

BURN PITS: KNOW THE FACTS



AIRBORNE HAZARD CONCERNS:

Many Veterans are concerned about exposure to airborne hazards after deployment to Iraq and Afghanistan. Airborne hazards include particulate matter and gaseous air pollutants that may originate from the following sources:

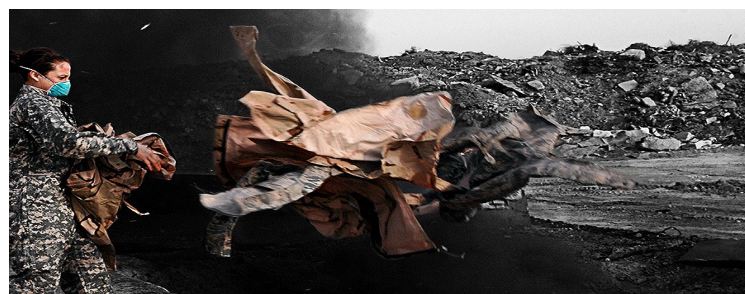
- Burning of human and non-human solid wastes
- Smoke from structural fires and explosions
- Smoke from burning oil wells
- Dust and sand particles
- Industrial and ambient air pollution
- Aircraft and automobile engine exhaust

IN-PERSON EVALUATION

After filling out the registry self-assessment questionnaire, Veterans with continuing symptoms and concerns can contact their local VA facility to request an in-person medical evaluation. If the Veteran is already enrolled in the VA, an appointment should be scheduled with the primary care provider or the patient aligned care team (PACT).

If a Veteran is not enrolled in the VA, the Veteran can request a registry evaluation by the local Environmental Health Clinician

(see <http://www.publichealth.va.gov/exposures/coordinators.asp> for a listing of environmental health clinicians by facility).



The more data the VA has, the quicker statistical correlations can be made. Do your part and participate!

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

DO I NEED TO PARTICIPATE IN THE REGISTRY TO SUBMIT A CLAIM FOR DISABILITY COMPENSATION THROUGH VA?

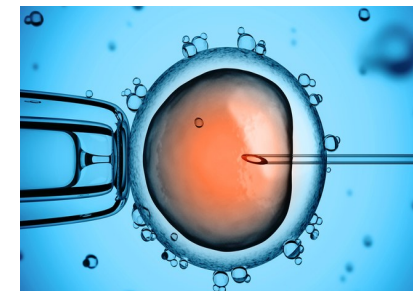
Veterans do not need to participate in the registry to submit a claim for disability compensation. The registry and the disability compensation processes are separate and not related. Veterans can find information on how to submit a claim for disability compensation through VA at the following link: <http://www.benefits.va.gov/compensation/>

WHAT IS A BURN PIT?

The use of burn pits was a common waste disposal practice at military sites outside of the U.S. such as in Iraq and Afghanistan. Smoke and other emissions from these pits contained an unknown mixture of substances that may have short and long-term health effects, especially for individuals who were exposed for longer periods or those with pre-existing conditions such as asthma or other lung or heart conditions.

WHY DOES THE QUESTIONNAIRE ASK QUESTIONS ABOUT MY CURRENT JOB AND HOBBIES?

It is important for medical providers to have a complete picture of your health. The questionnaire asks a broad range of questions because an individual's health is greatly influenced by their lifestyle. Health conditions can worsen over time from additional or prolonged exposures received during work or recreation. Note: Your current or past jobs, hobbies, civilian exposures, and lifestyle will not affect eligibility for benefits.



INFERTILITY

CONTINUED ...

5 Nutrition Tips to Improve Fertility



- Eat adequate amounts of Iron especially iron from vegetables: beans, lentils, spinach, fortified cereals. Vitamin C can help you to absorb iron.
- Eat less animal protein and more vegetable proteins. Try beans, nuts and seeds, lentils, tofu or tempeh and whole grains to get adequate protein.
- Women trying to conceive should consume adequate daily folate to reduce the risk of neural tube defects.
- Eat less saturated fat from cheese, butter, and processed foods. Eat more unsaturated fats such as nuts, seeds, fish, and olive oil.
- Choose more whole grains and less refined grains.

A health pregnancy starts with a healthy foundation. If you think your diet could use some help, ask your primary care provider for a nutrition consult or call:

Who is eligible for IVF?

Under recent law, IVF is covered for some Veterans and their spouses. Eligibility is determined by a service-connected disability and clinical judgment of the health care provider. The eligibility requirements are as follows:

- The Veteran must be legally married.
- The Veteran must have service-connected condition causing infertility.
- The Veteran or spouse must have an intact uterus and at least one functioning ovary.
- The Veteran or spouse must be able to produce sperm.

How can I access infertility services?

Veterans interested in infertility services should contact their VA health care provider. VA IVF services are not available outside the United States.

What if I have more questions about infertility services at VA?

Speak with your VA health care provider to learn more about infertility services. If you are ineligible for infertility services through VA, financial assistance through community sources may be available. Veterans can also contact their local VA Women Veteran Program Manager for more information about infertility services.



Trust her to find answers.
The Women Veterans Call Center is your guide to VA.

Call 1-855-VA-WOMEN (1-855-829-6636)
Anonymous Chat at www.womenshealth.va.gov

Hours of Operation:
Mon-Fri 8 a.m. to 10 p.m. ET
Sat. 8 a.m. to 6:30 p.m. ET

1-855-VA-WOMEN
3 WOMEN VETERANS
CALL CENTER

U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs